

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, January 4. 1696.

Quest. 1. **T**HE Picts-Wall. In whose time was it built, where erected and by whom, and of what matter, and are there yet any remains and ruines of it to be discovered?

Ans. This, we think, is the substance of one or two queries we have had on this subject. The last among several others, where we had not room to answer it; however we hope our present reply will be more satisfactory, having since that time met with several things relating to it, which had not before come to our knowledge: And here we must take notice that there were two Walls built by the Romans to restrain the Incurfions of the Picts and Barbarous Nations into Britain, which as Gildas tell us, was so far subdu'd and inur'd to the customs of their Conquerors that 'twas call'd the Roman Island; It being an usual way among those masters of the World, when they had extended the bounds of their Empire in any place, as far as they thought fit to secure their conquest with Walls and Trenches. Such was the Wall in Assyria, mention'd by Ammianus, Marcellinus, and that afterward in the Morea, as the Chinese Wall long before. The most Northerly of these two Walls was built by Lollius Urbicus, the successful Lieutenant of Antoninus Pius here in Britain, between Glotta and Bodotria, or Dunbritton, and Edenborow-Frith, in or near the same place, where Julius Agricola had before set Garrisons in leed, but neither built a Wall, as Camden in one passage seems to intimate, nor so much as design'd it, the Scotch Historian expressly affirms it of him. The most Southern Wall was built some time before this of Urbicus, by Hadrian, (who has left his name in several places, particularly at Pont-Bland, so call'd from Pons Calia) between Solway Frith, anciently I—Æstuarium, from the River Eden which empties it self into it and the mouth of the Tyne. This he erected when the former Frontiur was lost, tho afterward recover'd by Urbicus, which being lost a second time, Severus built his on the ruines of Hadrian's, or rather repair'd and finish'd it. Tho in Diocletian's time the Romans recover'd again their old Bounds, and Carausius, if we may credit Nennius, repair'd the Northern Wall, strengthened it with seven Castles, and built a Triumphal-Arch in memory of a great Victory, near this Wall, on the bank of the River Carron. Lastly, says Camden, in Sterling-shire, the Romans fence'd this place in the Reign of Theodosius the younger under the conduct of Gallio of Ravenna. Which seems some small mistake in that learned person, for he had said before, in his Treatise of the Pict's Wall, in the words of Bede, that the Romans being recall'd for the defence of Gaul, they advis'd the Britains to build a Wall cross the Island, which they accordingly built, Insuabini, says Bede, murum constituents, tho not of stone but Turf, as wanting skillful artificers, from Penvalhel to Alcluith. The Romans advis'd the Britains to build it, but did not it seems stay to see it done, much less do it themselves. Tho the second Wall which they afterwards built, where Severus had made his, was indeed by the assistance of the Romans, and 'tis also very likely that the Romans did for themselves repair the former Northern Wall in the time of Theodosius, who reduc'd all that tract of Ground between the two Walls into a Province, which he call'd Valentia, yet once more a Wall was built, at the last coming of the Romans hither to assist the Britains, by their advice and aid, in the same place where before Severus had made his Vallum, (they are Bede's express words,) and that of Stone, firmo de lapide, whereas his was only of Earth. So that on the whole the Northern Wall, (now call'd Graham's Dike, either from one Graham, a famous Pict that us'd it seems now and then to make bold with't, or from the Mons Grampius, the Grants-brin-Hills, not far from it, was built, and repair'd, at least three times, by Urbicus, Carausius, and lastly the Britains alone when Gallio had left 'em: The Southern-Wall had much the same Fortune, having been also thrice built and repair'd by Hadrian, Severus, and at last by the united Forces of the Britains and Romans.

This in general, but it may be necessary, or at least divertive to consider some things more particularly concerning these two Walls; as what substance they were made of, and in what manner? Whether Severus his Wall were in Scotland, or what is now call'd England? Where each of 'em began and ended what

places they pass? What Footsteps of 'em yet to be seen, or preserv'd in History, and lastly what ancient Inscriptions, or other antiquities have been dug up about 'em, which may give us better Light into their former State and Condition. The Southern, which is generally call'd Severus his Wall, was built of Turf, or by him, as well as Adrian before him, as the Saxon Paraphrase on Bede expressly tells us. Tho Bede says it was not a Murus, but a Vallum. For the former, says he, is built of stone, the latter only of Earth. Yet this distinction will not hold, those two words being often confounded, of which we have two unanswerable instances in this very matter. The first, that the Brittain still call it both Gaul-Sever, and Mur-Sever. The second, that the little Village beyond Newcastle, which yet carries the name of Walls-End, is, in the Liber Notitiarum call'd Windobala, but by Antoninus Windomora. Bal, Gual, and Val, being the same, as well as Mur, in the provincial Language of the Brittain. Nor can we see what reason the Author of the Marginal Notes on Camden, could have to blame some body or other for an Interpolation in Bede, Lib. 1. Cap. 12. Where he says the Wall began at Penvalhel, wherewith he tell us, Buchanan and other Scotch writers were so much pleas'd and that if it proves any thing at all, it only shows that Windobala was call'd Penvalhel. Which is as true as if he should have said Knightsbridge was call'd by that name, a Walltown indeed there is in Scotland, which was built near the old Wall as appears by its name, which the Authors of the additions to Camden, in Scotland, p. 906 are inclin'd to think the same with Bede's Penvalhel, and he who writ the account of the Roman Wall there speaks of it as a matter past all doubt. The Penvalhel says he, where Bede says it begun, is call'd Walltown to this day: Tho both of 'em seem to be mistaken, for Bede's Penvalton was at the beginning of the Wall Incipit autem, says he, in loco qui sermone Pictorum, Penvalhel appellatur. But the foremention'd additions tell us, that 'it began near Abercorn Castle (two miles from it says Bede), and that one may trace it along from thence towards Cawdick, and that in a Line parallel, about a mile to the South of it, is this Walltown. With more likelihood from the Name, we should think might Kinneill, or Cewall pretend to be the old Penvalton, for Kin, in the ancient Brittain, signifies head, the same with Pen, the words being often us'd promiscuously, as Kirkmilloch, or Kir Pentilloch, one of the Forts on this Wall. As for Severus his Wall, or Rampire, Bede gives a full Description of it. Lib. 1. Cap. 5. 'Twas made says he of Turfs, which being grav'd up from the Earth they built with 'em a fort of a Wall, very high above the ground, in such manner that the Ditch out of which the Turfs were taken, lay before it, with very strong Stakes or Palisado's driven in all along the Brink. So that, at last Severus drew this great Ditch and strong Wall, fortified with many Towers, from one Sea to the other. Hadrian's Wall it seems had no Towers, tho 'twas of a vast bigness, and as an old Author says, lookt like a mountain. However, the Barbarians soon broke through it, tho that of Severus, seems to have found 'em more work, having strong Garrisons and Stone Towers, the ruines of which, call'd Chesters, are many of 'em yet to be seen. Tho a very learned and reverend person seems to have been mistaken, when he affirms that Severus his Wall was of Stone, his words are, Severus the Emperor built his Wall of Stone upon Adrian's Frontier. Bede, who exactly follows Gildas, and in many places just transcribes him, is clear that 'twas of Turf, has been already said. The Saxon Paraphrase affirms as much in two places. And other old Annals call it, Weal of Turfum, a Turf Wall: Yet farther, Hadrian's was undoubtedly of Earth, and Palisado's together, Muralls sepes, a Hedg like a Wall, as Spallian calls it: And the old Rosa Temporum says 'twas of Turfs, and Severus, as has been said, did not so much make a New Wall, as repair the old. Helior Boetius, as far as his credit goes, tells us that he only order'd Hadrian's wall to be repair'd, and again, that their Annals tell 'em that the wall which was begun by Hadrian, was finish'd by Severus, and Surita, a learned Spaniard quoted by Camden, that Hadrian's Fence was carry'd on (so the Translator has render'd, longius productum fuisse, but whether to the Authors full intent, we shall anon enquire) and completed with

with vast works by Severus. Camden is also positive that Severus his wall was not of stone, but Earth: This Vallum, says he, was nothing else but a wall of Turf, and it cannot with any Truth be affirm'd that 'twas of stone, tho he adds lower, That in the place thereof a wall of stone was built some two hundred years after. Nor can we find any ancient Author that affirms the contrary, unless we'll take O Flagberly for one, who in his *Ogygia domestica* p. 418. says of Severus, *quod Adriani cespitium murum firmo de Lapide reparavit*. But the best is, he quotes no Author, not so much as any old Ballad or Irish Chronicle, to confirm his assertion: Tho we confess there's another of his Countrymen whose Judgment is weighty against us, 'Tis that of the Great Usher, who we find in his Antiquities, is of opinion that 'twas built of stone, tho we hope we may modestly dissent from his Authority, unless we were convinc'd by his Reasons. Nor is it any wonder he should be of that opinion, for according to his Notion, as well as the former very learned and reverend person's the wall of Severus was the last that was built on Hadrian's Foundation, and this being now evidently of stone, as appears by the ruins, they could not think but as they did. But if it appears, as we hope it will anon that the last wall built by the Britains and the Romans together, before their final parting, was at the Time, and Eden not at Dunbritton and Edenborough, there will then be less difficulty in this matter.

As for the Fashion of these Walls, they are indeed describ'd with a great deal of curiosity and exactness, in the account of that in Scotland at the end of Camden, and we have very good reason to believe that the more Southern wall was made after the same manner. First, there was a Ditch of twelve Foot wide before the wall as Bede before describ'd it. Then a wall of hewn stone, two Foot broad, higher then the rest of the Rampire, to cover the defendants and keep the Earth from falling into the Trench. Next the Wall or Rampire itself, Ten Foot thick. Then a pay'd way at the Foot of the wall, five Foot broad. There were also Watch-Towers, within call of one another, which seem to have been the same with the Castle-fleeds in the Southern, against every one of which Towers there was another wall of stone, going thro' the Breadth of the Rampire. There were also several places near the wall, which seem to have been Courts of Guard with a void place within, surrounded with thick Rampires, as those top's with stone, like the Grand wall.

For the Southern wall, Bede describes it, who had often seen the Ruines of it, being born very near it, in the confines of the monastery of St. Peter and St. Paul, *quod est*, says he, *ad Marimudam, & Ingirum*. The latter now call'd Farrow, the former Monks were mouth, near the mouth of the Tine, and doubtless a great part of it must be then standing having been built but little more then two hundred years before his Birth: Who says expressly of it in his 12 Cap. that 'twas, *Heddenus famasum and conspicuum*, and says 'twas eight feet broad and twelve high, narrower by two Foot then that in Scotland. And Camden who had actually trac'd and survey'd it, describes it with a Ditch on the outside, a military way on the Inside, with Towers at a Miles distance, now call'd Castle-fleeds, and a sort of fortify'd little Towns which they call Chesters, of a square Form, the same we suppose with the Courts of Guards in the Scotch wall, as all the rest of the Description exactly answers.

But still some make a question whether Severus his wall were built in Scotland or England. Bishop Usher follows Buchanan, who lugs it into Scotland, as his Countrymen do K. Arthur, and even Julius Caesar. He has the stream of writers against him, both of his own Nation and ours, as well as all others, but he has one antiquary yet living of his side who knows more then he himself and all the rest together, yet he can't be of his mind, for these Reasons, 1st. Because it's demonstrable that Severus did build a wall between the Tine and Solway, but he never built more then one wall that we cou'd meet with in any Writer. That he did build it here, we prove, 1st from the British names, *Gual-Sever: Mur-Sever*: The same with *Fossa Severia* already mention'd. 2d. By the general Testimony and agreement of Authors. Thirdly, by the irrefragable Evidence of Inscription and Monuments. There having been many votive Altars dug up near this wall which bear his and his sons names, tho not one of 'em ever heard of about the Scottish Wall; we shall instance but in one, tho a home one, mention'd in the Notes on Camden, p. 838. That there was lately found, not far from Caerlile, near the Vallum, a stone with this Inscription. *Septimio Severo Imperatori, qui murum hunc condidit*. To the Emperor Septimius Severus, who built this wall. It's as plain that Antoninus

Pius built the Dunbritton-wall, by his Lieutenant Urbicus; however that Severus did not build it; For those who think 'twas his, do also hold that Severus his wall was built of stone, but 'tis certain this Northern wall was not built of stone, only caps with it, from the Description already given of it. Again, Capitolinus and others expressly affirm that this wall was built under Antoninus, and yet further, there are Monuments and Inscriptions to Antoninus found about the Scotch wall, but none to Severus, as about the Southern, to Severus, but not one to this Antoninus: Particularly, there's one stone dug up, of the conquering Legion, another of the *Legio Augusta*, which are inscrib'd, *Imp. Caf. Hadriano, Antonino Augusto, Pio, &c.* And another Inscription there is to the same purpose on the *Aedes Termini* at the end of Sir R. Sibbald's Tine; Which being so plain, must still remain unanswerable, tho there might lie some difficult objections against it, which we think there do not. As first, the distance is objected, which is said by Eutropius, to be but 30 odd miles between the two Seats where Severus his wall began and ended, whereas some make the length of the Southern wall 130 miles: We answer, that even 30 miles is a 3d part more then the distance of Glotta and Bodotria, which are but about 20 miles asunder, as for the other distance, 'tis a plain mistake XXX for LXXX. the L being dropt in some Copies, in others chang'd into a C. whence they made CXXX. but the middle is the right, and agrees to the Southern Wall but by no means to the Northern. They have a second objection, that the wall of Severus, on whose Foundations that of the Britains was afterwards built with stone, went *directa tramite*, as Gillis, or *re-cta linea*, as Bede, in a straight Line from shore to shore, which that in Scotland does, but this of the Tine is extremely oblique and crooked: We answer, that tho it be not Mathematically straight, yet 'tis plain to any who consults the Maps, that there is but very little ground lost, and good reason for that too, since if they do warp a little, 'twas to get the two great Rivers the Irthing and Tine behind the wall, as a double fortification, and besides, when it creeps down below Caerlile and Stanwick, running along for 7 or 8 miles by the Sea shore at Solway Frith, this was because the Picts us'd to get over that Frith, both in their Boats and even without 'em, at Low Water, and plunder the Country before this wall was made, which, as 'twas contriv'd by Hadrian, did certainly end at the River Esk, of the Northside the Frith, for so say all old writers concerning it. But lest the Country so open, that Severus it seems, thought fit to order it otherwise, and get a triple Pence instead of a single, by the Sea, the Wall and the River, and this seems to be the meaning of the expression before mention'd, of the walls being, *Longius productum* by Severus then 'twas by Hadrian, as for ought we know might also be the case at the Eastern End, Tinmouth Castle it self, tho beyond the Walls-End, being anciently call'd, *Pen-bal-crag* or the Rock in the Head of the Wall. And on the other side, there are considerable remains on the Southern shores, of those Castles which the Romans built at their departure, to defend them from their Enemies, who came in swarms from Ireland to plunder 'em. Nor seems there any weight in what O Flagberly further urges, that 'tis unlikely the Britains wou'd chuse so inconvenient a place for a wall when they might have one so much shorter in Scotland, and gain'd thereby near 100 miles more, since the same holds against Hadrian and Severus. Nor in what he adds to establish his opinion, That Bede says the Picts immediately seiz'd all the Northparts of the Island as far as the wall for their own when the Romans finally departed, which seems rather to make full against him, for 'twou'd not be sence to say they seiz'd what they had before, the Countrys North of Glotta and Bodotria, but 'tis very likely they seiz'd all the New Province of Valentia, *isque ad murum*, between the two Walls, and as far as the second. The Southern Wall, begins at Bullness, thought to be the old *Blarum* *Bulgium* of Antoninus, and has a considerable part of it, in some places still standing, all but the Battlements, keeping its name, often giving name to Towns in its passage. Through Cumberland, over the River Eden by Carlisle, the old *Lugovallum*, or Tower of Wall, The Cambeck, near Wallton, the Irthing, and into Northumberland near Thetwall, so on to Chester in the wall, Busby-Gap, VVall-wick, the old *Gallara* forward for Newcastle, and almost every where in its passage are dug up noble Inscriptions and Monuments, which the Romans it seems were much given to; for among others found near the Northern-Wall, one was *Cobortis Hispanorum Tibicen hic jacet*. Much a kin to that modern one, Who ligs here? Honest Janny our Piper. And so much of these curious questions.